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XXIII.—THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRIEF NARRATIVE IN MODERN FRENCH LITERATURE:
A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Brief narrative, at first thought, connotes the abridged fiction of low grade with which American magazines are now saturated; but as soon as the term is used to cover the whole field in modern literature, it calls to mind a *genre* which, under various names, has risen to a position of dignity in many places in the world and has worthily engaged the attention of literary historians, particularly in America and in Germany.

The chief features in the development of the form in the United States and England have been discussed at length, and there is now a definitive record, with abundant bibliographical apparatus, of its evolution.¹ Poe is looked upon as the pioneer, and his perpetually quoted definition (1842) has set a standard for the majority of the practitioners of the art in the English language. The form suggests, for America, such experts as Hawthorne, Bret Harte, and Henry James; in England it does not gain the attention of writers of the first magnitude until near the end of the century, in the persons of Stevenson and Kipling.

The German *Novelle* has been subjected to even closer scrutiny, as appears from a recent monograph by Profes-

¹ Cf. Brander Matthews, *The Philosophy of the Short-Story*, New York, 1901; H. S. Canby, *The Short Story*, New York, 1902; Bliss Perry, *A Study of Prose Fiction*, Boston, 1902; C. S. Baldwin, *American Short Stories*, New York, 1909; H. S. Canby, *The Short Story in English*, New York, 1909; C. A. Smith, *The American Short Story*, Boston, 1912.

sor Mitchell,² wherein he reviews the territory from the first noteworthy attempt at a definition, that of the brothers Schlegel, through Goethe and Tieck to Spielhagen and Paul Heyse.

Both types, it has been demonstrated, are essentially different from the novel, as regards narrative concentration, and they vary from each other chiefly in that the American form aims "to produce a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means that is consistent with the utmost emphasis,"³ while the *Novelle*, although it likewise requires a high degree of unity, is far less restricted and does not need to be superlatively compact.

Now it is amazing that there exists no similar history of the practice and theory of the French *conte* and *nouvelle*. France possesses an impressive brief-narrative literature, the product of a corresponding period, yet, except for casual references and a few special articles,⁴ the problem of its development has not been considered.

It is for such an investigation that a plan is here offered and certain landmarks indicated which may prove useful guides.

Those literary historians, for the most part Americans, who have glanced at the subject, are inclined to choose the neighborhood of 1830 as a point of departure. With this there is no reason to disagree, as will presently be shown, provided it is realized that these critics are deliberately looking at the matter from a special angle. They are writing from the point of view of the American short-

² *Heyse and his predecessors in the theory of the Novelle*, Frankfurt, 1915.

³ Clayton Hamilton, *Materials and Methods of Fiction*, New York, 1908, p. 173.

⁴ Cf. a list of these in my article on *Balzac and the Short-Story*, *Modern Philology*, XII, p. 72, note 2.

story and they mean that a type of narrative identical with this began to develop in France about 1830. An examination of the field so conducted is worth while and must be taken into account in the present article, where, to avoid confusion, the expression "short-story" will be used only in application to the distinctive American type or to the French form which exactly corresponds to it.

But whoever considers the mass of brief-narrative literature in modern France will discover a multitude of pieces of merit that stand outside of these limits, and obviously, in a complete history, these may not be neglected.

With the angle of vision widened, it becomes necessary to include an earlier period, to look back into the preceding century. Indeed, Professor Hart, in an article on the *fabliaux*,⁵ connects modern brief narrative with the Middle Ages, and no doubt the ultimate record must contain a summary of the antecedents of the modern *conte* and *nouvelle* which shall be as inclusive as this. The notable developments, however, hardly extend beyond the last hundred and fifty years.

A pioneer theorist, perhaps the earliest, is Marmontel, writing in the supplement to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* in 1776. The novelty of his view will stand out by contrast if one first glances at the brief-narrative criticism found in the original edition of the *Encyclopédie* (1754 is the date of the volume in question). The comment here is both meagre and uncertain. D'Alembert, describing *conte*, *fable*, and *roman* as synonyms, affirms "que *conte* est une histoire fausse et courte . . . ou une *fable* sans but moral; et *roman* un long *conte*."⁶ And Diderot, supplying the

⁵ *The Narrative Art of the Old French Fabliaux*, Kittredge Anniversary Papers, Boston, 1913.

⁶ Vol. iv, p. 111. D'Alembert continues: "On dit les *fables* de

comparison of *conte* and *fable*, in the department of *Belles-Lettres*, underlines the shapelessness of the former:

Il y a cette différence entre le *conte* et la *fable* que la *fable* ne contient qu'un seul et unique fait, renfermé dans un certain espace déterminé, et achevé dans un seul temps . . . au lieu qu'il n'y a dans le *conte* ni unité de temps, ni unité d'action ni unité de lieu.⁷

Marmontel, on the other hand, writes with precision, and, contrary to his predecessors, insists upon a degree of unity and believes there is an essential distinction between *roman* and *conte*. He contends that

un récit qui ne serait qu'un enchaînement d'aventures, sans cette tendance commune qui les réunit en un point et les réduit à l'unité, ce récit serait un roman et ne serait pas un conte.⁸

This remark must be emphasized, for it is apparently the first suggestion ever made that the difference between extended and brief narrative should be more than a matter of length. Professor Matthews, more than one hundred years later, appears to be the first critic to make the distinction for American and English literature,⁹ while in

Lafontaine, les *contes* du même auteur, les *contes* de Madame d'Au-
noy, le *roman* de la princesse de Clèves. *Conte* se dit aussi des
histoires plaisantes, vraies ou fausses, que l'on fait dans la conver-
sation. *Fable*, d'un fait historique donné pour vrai, et reconnu pour
faux; et *roman*, d'une suite d'aventures singulières réellement ar-
rivées à quelqu'un."

⁷ *Id.*, *ibid.* The definition is not written by Diderot, but pro-
vided by him as editor. It goes on: "La *fable* est souvent un mono-
logue ou une scène de comédie; le *conte* est une suite de comédies
enchaînées les unes aux autres. Lafontaine excelle dans les deux
genres, quoiqu'il ait quelques *fables* de trop, et quelques *contes* trop
longs."

⁸ *Nouveau dictionnaire pour servir de supplément aux diction-
naires des sciences*, etc., Paris, 1776, II, p. 569. The article is to be
found, enlarged and revised, in Marmontel's *Eléments de Littéra-
ture* (*Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1818, XII, pp. 521 ff.).

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 77. Professor Matthews points out indeed that "there

the case of Germany the first significant differentiation of *Roman* and *Novelle* is found in an essay on the subject by Mundt, dating 1833.¹⁰ Marmontel has the prior claim by half a century.¹¹

It may not be implied that he has a carefully elaborated theory comparable to Mundt's or to Professor Matthews's. Instead of developing the idea contained in the above quotation, Marmontel turns at once to other phases of narration.¹²

Yet, in the preface to his own *Contes moraux*,¹³ and in a few of these stories, he does reveal some of the possi-

is little doubt that Poe felt it [the difference], even if he did not formulate it in set terms."

¹⁰ Cf. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

¹¹ An article published the same year in the *Bibliothèque universelle des Romans* (Paris, Lacombe, octobre, 1776, p. 11) refers to "le genre des Nouvelles ou petits Romans." And in the preceding year the *Discours préliminaire* of this collection (juillet, 1775, p. 21) affirms that both *contes* and *nouvelles* are "Romans abrégés." I find no suggestion of any distinction at this period between *conte* and *nouvelle*.

¹² In the initial paragraph Marmontel presents his philosophy of the *conte*: "Le conte est à la comédie ce que l'épopée est à la tragédie, mais en petit, et voici pourquoi: l'action comique n'ayant ni la même importance, ni la même chaleur d'intérêt que l'action tragique, elle ne saurait nous attacher aussi longtemps lorsqu'elle est en simple récit. Les grandes choses nous semblent dignes d'être amenées de loin, et d'être attendues avec une longue inquiétude; les choses familières fatigueraient bientôt l'attention du lecteur, si au lieu d'agacer légèrement sa curiosité par de petites suspensions, elles la rebutaient par de longs épisodes. Il est rare d'ailleurs, qu'une action comique soit assez riche en incidents et en détails, pour donner lieu à des descriptions étendues et à de longues scènes." This and other remarks in the article should be thoughtfully considered in the light of whatever information may later be gathered as to the status of brief narrative in Marmontel's period.

¹³ *Œuvres complètes*, III, pp. ix-xvi. Two items in this preface seem to contain in embryo theories afterwards evolved in Germany. The view of Spielhagen that brief narrative by its nature is not

bilities of his definition. The core of each of his narratives, obviously enough, is a moral: each, he tells us, is meant to express one truth, to bring out one characteristic of human nature. He describes his conception in the case of a story named *Il le fallait* as follows:

On ne dit pas assez aux jeunes hommes combien pour eux les lois de la probité sont sévères, et dans quel labyrinthe de malheur et de honte un seul pas au-delà des bornes du vrai, du juste et de l'honnête se trouve quelquefois les avoir engagés. Je vais en donner un exemple.¹⁴

From the point of view of technique the advantage of this procedure, of setting out invariably with one preconceived object, lies in the resultant singleness of effect. In this particular story, for example, the unity is deep-seated. Thanks to what Marmontel would call "une tendance commune," a central idea, the events are amalgamated, and the result is a narrative totality equidistant from anecdote and novel.¹⁵

adapted to dealing with the development of character, is already suggested in Marmontel's remark (xiii-xiv): "Il est des caractères qui, pour être présentés dans toute leur force, exigent des combinaisons et des développements dont un conte n'est pas susceptible. . ." And the device later conceived by Tieck of having as a turning point in a *Novelle* an event simple and likely to happen any day, yet, in the circumstances, of special consequence, is foreshadowed in the statement (p. xiv): "A la vérité des caractères j'ai voulu joindre la simplicité des moyens, et je n'ai guère pris que les plus familiers. Ainsi un serin me sert à détromper et à guérir une femme de l'aveugle passion qui l'obsède; ainsi, quelques traits changés à un tableau réconcilient deux époux. . ."

¹⁴ *Œuvres complètes*, vi, p. 1.

¹⁵ Other stories of this order are *le Mari sylphe* and *les Rivaux d'eux-mêmes*. In many cases, on the other hand, the promise of the method is not realized. Cf. the story called *Heureusement*, wherein, Marmontel explains (vol. III, p. x), he tried "de faire voir à quoi tient le plus souvent la vertu d'une honnête femme, et combien sa faiblesse doit la rendre indulgente pour les fautes mêmes qu'elle

It is to tales like this that one may apply, with point, the remark made by Marmontel's publisher in a notice to the collection known as *Nouveaux contes moraux*:

Une fiction de peu d'étendue, régulièrement conduite, ayant un but moral, et formée . . . d'une suite d'événements naturels, empruntés de la vie commune, ne présente pas sans doute le mérite d'une aussi grande difficulté vaincue qu'un grand roman, où la naissance, les progrès, les effets des passions sont mis sous nos yeux, où sont en action un grand nombre de caractères, et où la multitude et la variété des événements et de leurs causes réveillent et exercent tous les genres de sentiments; mais c'est aussi un mérite de dessiner avec vérité plusieurs caractères dans un cadre plus resserré, de faire naître l'intérêt dans un récit peu étendu.¹⁶

As literature Marmontel's stories are intolerable, and it is impossible to subscribe to the publisher's not disinterested encomium. Yet, if structure alone be considered, it is likely that Marmontel was decidedly influential in introducing a special type of narrative, of a unity distinct from that of the novel, where a few characters act within prescribed limits.

This notice dates from 1801, two years after Marmontel's death. The narrative concentration which it outlines is strikingly illustrated a few years later in *Adolphe*, by Benjamin Constant (1806).¹⁷ This story, according to the author, was written "dans l'unique pensée de con-

a su éviter." The result is merely a string of anecdotes, of instances where a lady nearly succumbs to temptation. Observe also that in his definition of *conte* Marmontel selects, as examples of stories with a "tendance commune," *Joconde* and *la Fiancée du roi de Garbe* (referring presumably to La Fontaine's versions of these), narratives which have no more unity than *Heureusement*. That is to say, in these cases Marmontel did not carry his definition to its possible consequences.

¹⁶ *Ouvres complètes*, iv, pp. 243-244.

¹⁷ Completed in 1806 but not published until 1816. Cf. *RLR*, 1898, p. 229.

vaincre deux ou trois amis . . . de la possibilité de donner une sorte d'intérêt à un roman dont les personnages se réduisaient à deux, et dont la situation serait toujours la même."¹⁸ Although there were other motives, not here acknowledged, for the writing of *Adolphe*, the remark continues to be of interest. A perusal of *Adolphe* reveals expert composition, sharp focussing of attention upon the single theme, and even leaves the reader convinced of its propinquity to the later developed short-story type.¹⁹

A comment parallel to that of Constant is found in the preface to Balzac's *Argow le pirate* (1824).²⁰ Balzac desires the reader to observe the essential simplicity of his story and explains:

En général l'on ne se tire d'affaire dans la composition d'un roman que par la multitude des personnages et la variété des situations, et l'on n'a pas beaucoup d'exemples de romans à deux ou trois personnages, restreints à une seule situation.²¹

The performance falls short of the plan; *Argow le pirate* is diffuse. The conception, however, is precisely Constant's and not remote from Marmontel's, and suggests an aspect of the problem, namely the question of the influence upon brief narrative of the condensed novel, which requires further investigation.

¹⁸ *Adolphe*, Paris, 1864, pp. 29-30 (Préface de la troisième édition).

¹⁹ Cf. Professor Lanson on the composition of *Adolphe*: "Rien de plus classique que ce roman à deux personnages, où les sobres indications de cadre et de milieu laissent la crise morale s'étaler largement" (*Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris, 1908, p. 978).

²⁰ Cf. Lovenjoul, *Histoire des œuvres de Balzac*, Paris, 1888, p. 256.

²¹ Vol. I, p. 15. Balzac had apparently not read *Adolphe* at this time (cf. Le Breton, *Balzac*, Paris, 1905, p. 76), for he adds that "dans ce genre, *Caleb Williams*, le chef-d'œuvre du célèbre Godwin, est, de notre époque, le seul ouvrage que l'on connaisse. . . ." Constant also was acquainted with *Caleb Williams*, but seems to have been more interested in the author's political theories than in his fiction (cf. *RLR*, 1898, p. 210).

By 1830, it has been stated, there are signs of the development of a French form comparable to the American short-story. Mérimée and Gautier have been accredited, by the American critics, with pioneer work: Professor Canby says that the former "in such a story as *Mateo Falcone* (1829) had illustrated the art of single effect in a short story before Poe's first tale was published,"²² and Professor Baldwin considers Gautier's *la Morte amoureuse* (1836) the first genuine short-story in France, and sums up with the remark: "it is safe to put forward as a working hypothesis that the new form was invented by France and by America, and by each independently for itself."²³

In general the American view, which is offered merely as a hypothesis, is acceptable, although evidence can be adduced that suggests a revision of details. It can be demonstrated, for example, that Gautier's activities in this field begin not with *la Morte amoureuse* but as early as 1831.²⁴ And the remark of Balzac, quoted above, to the effect that there is a peculiar virtue in a narrative wherein there are only a few characters, restricted to a single situation, later bore fruit in his own work in the

²² Canby, *Study of the Short Story*, New York, 1913, p. 45. Cf. Lauvrière, *Poe*, Paris, 1904, p. 646: "L'énergique laconisme de la nouvelle avait été porté par Mérimée à un haut degré de perfection avant que Poe qui en profita peut-être ne l'eût remis en vogue."

²³ *Op. cit.*, Intro., p. 34.

²⁴ At the commencement of Gautier's literary career, in 1831, stands a story, *la Cafetière*, which in conception if not in execution is quite comparable to the Poe type, and between this date and 1836 there are four others which may be said to approach the short-story and which offer interesting and conclusive evidence that during this period of five years Gautier was advancing, consciously or not, toward the form finally achieved. Cf. *Onuphrius*; *Omphale*; the story of a youth and a *grisette* inserted in *Sous la table*; and the story without name published by Lovenjoul, *Histoire des œuvres de Théophile Gautier*, Paris, 1887, vol. I, pp. 8-11. The last two are little more than amplified anecdotes, but they have the short-story stamp.

form of three tales, *une Passion dans le désert* (1830), *Jésus-Christ en Flandre* (1831), and *la Grande Bretèche* (1832), which may be classified as, in the American sense, short-stories.²⁵

The essential fact, however, remains as stated; in the neighborhood of 1830 there is a notable advance. Unhappily for the historian, neither Mérimée nor Balzac nor Gautier makes any declaration during this period that illuminates his processes, and, curiously enough, no sooner is the form launched than its originators, except Mérimé, abandon it. And Mérimée persistence is intermittent.²⁶

So the complete history of the genesis of the form must determine what other men, if any, wrote short-stories in this period, up to about 1840. Anything before that point may probably be stamped as an independent French product. At the beginning of the next decade are published the first translations of the work of Poe (1841).²⁷ The American becomes more and more widely known in France, in 1846 appears an important critical estimate of his works,²⁸ in 1848 begin the translations by Baudelaire, and in 1857 Baudelaire reproduces the famous Poe definition. Therefore, as the century advances the influence of Poe must be taken more and more into account.

To return, however, to the three writers who relinquished this type, the French short-story, after creating it, it is found that they also wrote brief narrative of another

²⁵ Cf. the article on *Balzac and the short-story*, referred to above, p. 584, note 4.

²⁶ *L'Abbé Aubain* (1846) is short-story though certainly not conventional, and *la Chambre bleue* (1866), *toute proportion gardée*, suggests O. Henry.

²⁷ Cf. Retinger, *le Conte fantastique dans le romantisme français*, Paris, 1909, p. 33, note. On French translations of Poe cf. also Lauvrière, *op. cit.*, and Morris, *Cooper et Poe d'après la critique française du dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris, 1912.

²⁸ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 octobre, 1846.

stamp, much more reminiscent of the theory presented by Marmontel. Balzac's *la Femme abandonnée* (1832) is an example of a number of narratives that are without the compactness necessary from Poe's point of view and that, as a result of developing a more elaborate structure about a single nucleus, nevertheless achieve a unity quite as artistic.²⁹

Here too these men were more given to practice than to theory. Gautier, however, on one occasion offers unconsciously a useful clue. In *Arria Marcella* (1852) he stops short to remark that he is presenting "le simple récit d'une aventure bizarre et peu croyable, quoique vraie,"³⁰ and it can easily be proven that this purely casual statement is nearly identical with Goethe's famous definition of the *Novelle*: "Was ist eine Novelle anders als eine sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit?"³¹ There is no evidence that Gautier was inspired by the German,³² and the words that so neatly correspond to Goethe's, and in addition so well epitomize his own processes, appear to be a felicitous accident.

But, taken in conjunction with the observable practice of the three Frenchmen, this remark leads to the suggestion that, alongside of the French short-story, there is developing another distinctive type of brief narrative that may approach the German *Novelle*. The idea is presented without emphasis, since it would be unfortunate to appraise the French product constantly according to a for-

²⁹ Other instances in his work are *Adieu* (1830) and *le Succube* (1833). Cf. Gautier's *Nuit de Cléopâtre* (1838), *le Roi Candaule* (1844), *Arria Marcella* (1852), etc.; Mérimée's *Tamango* (1829), *le Vase étrusque* (1830), *il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia* (1846), etc.

³⁰ *Romans et contes*, Paris, Charpentier, p. 273.

³¹ *Gespräche mit Eckermann*, 29. Jan., 1827.

³² There are a few casual references to Goethe in Gautier's works. Cf. *Histoire de l'art dramatique*, Paris, 1859, I, p. 193; IV, p. 337.

eign standard. Yet, properly restricted, the comparison may prove useful.

A pause and a glance backward at brief narrative before 1850 now reveal the facts in fairly correct perspective. Marmontel is a pioneer, and the distinction he foreshadowed between extended and brief narrative is vital. After Marmontel there is no swift advance until about 1830, when two forms begin to develop, one comparable for singleness of effect and superlative concision to the American short-story, another unified but far less restricted and comparable in some respects to the German *Novelle*. Both are contained in germ in Marmontel, although they can hardly be a direct outgrowth.

From the middle of the century on, currents and cross-currents intermingle. It is not likely that the two varieties of brief narrative progress steadily along parallel lines; there must be at times amalgamation, the introduction of new elements, perhaps the creation of other varieties. An interesting variation is found in *le Procureur de Judée*, by Anatole France,³³ wherein, as with Poe, the tendency of every word is to the one pre-established design,³⁴ but wherein, contrary to the practice of Poe and that of the French short-story writers, the tendency is deliberately and consistently the reverse of direct. Foreign influences have to be weighed, that of Poe, as has been suggested, that of the Germans, whose *Novelle* theories culminate in the definition of Paul Heyse published in 1871, that of the Russians.³⁵ Conditions of periodical publica-

³³ The first story in the collection entitled *l'Etui de nacre*.

³⁴ Cf. Poe's definition, *Works*, New York, Crowell, 1902, XI, p. 108.

³⁵ Cf. Baldwin, *op. cit.* Intro., p. 34, note: "It would be interesting, for instance, to determine whether Mérimée learned anything in form from Poushkin."

tion are presumably a factor, as they are, for example, in the United States.³⁶

The problem of terminology also presents itself. In Germany *Novelle* now designates a recognized type, in America short-story has been given a similar function, but it is still an embarrassing question as to what French narratives are to be denominated *contes* and what *nouvelles*.

One solution, not perhaps definitive, has been given by Ferdinand Brunetière, who writes, apropos of Balzac:

The *nouvelle* differs from the *conte* in that it always claims to be a picture of ordinary life; and it differs from the novel in that it selects from ordinary life, and depicts by preference and almost exclusively, those examples of the strange, the rare and the extraordinary which ordinary life does in spite of its monotony nevertheless contain. It is neither strange nor rare for a miser to make all the people about him, including his wife and children, victims of the passion to which he is himself enslaved; and this is the subject of *Eugénie Grandet*. . . . But for a husband, as in *La Grande Bretèche*, to wall up his wife's lover in a closet, and that before her very eyes; and, through a combination of circumstances in themselves quite out of the ordinary, for neither one of them to dare or to be able to make any defense against his vengeance—that is certainly somewhat rare!³⁷

The fantastic, Brunetière continues, is to be treated in the *conte*, not in the *nouvelle*.

³⁶ Cf. C. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. Gautier sometimes meets the requirements of the *feuilleton* system with conspicuous success, as in *Avatar*, where it may be argued that the restraint imposed by this method of publication induced throughout a high degree of narrative control.

³⁷ *Honoré de Balzac*, Little French Masterpieces, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903, Intro., pp. xiv-xv. Brunetière further explains the scope of the *nouvelle* with the statement that, in general, "all those things in life which are out of the usual run of life, which happen *on its margin* and are so beside yet not outside it; all that makes its surprises, its differences, its *startlingness*, so to speak—all this is the province of the *nouvelle*, bordering on that of the novel yet distinct from it. Out of the common every-day life you cannot really make *nouvelles*, but only novels—miniature novels, when they are brief, but still novels."

The distinction is lucid and interesting. Yet equally clean-cut, and quite at variance, is the distinction made by the American critics viewing the French field, who identify *conte* with short-story and allege that a *nouvelle* is merely a novelet, that is, a condensed novel.³⁸

The entanglement becomes even worse upon inspection of the six stories of the Balzac volume for which Brunetière writes the above-quoted introduction. All six are, in Brunetière's sense, *nouvelles*. On the other hand, the history of their publication³⁹ shows that four of them were not classified, that the fifth, *le Réquisitionnaire*, appeared in the first edition of *Romans et contes philosophiques* and presumably was considered by Balzac a *conte*, while the sixth, *le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*, was first presented by Balzac with the subtitle, *conte fantastique*. *Conte fantastique*, it is remembered, is precisely the term which Brunetière says is not applicable.⁴⁰ Furthermore, if the narratives are looked at with the eyes of the American critics, two of them are *contes*,⁴¹ but not the two so styled by Balzac himself.

It is vain to risk making confusion doubly confounded by suggestions of reform in nomenclature until there is a clearer conception of what one is attempting to name, and at best the final choice may be arbitrary, for it can hardly be hoped that any system will square with the facts of the practice of the art and also with the terminology of the practitioners.⁴²

³⁸ Cf. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 169, especially: "The difference is merely that the novelet (or *nouvelle*) is a work of less extent, and covers a smaller canvas, than the novel (or *roman*)." Cf. Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Baldwin, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 30-31.

³⁹ Cf. Lovenjoul, *Histoire des œuvres de Balzac*, pp. 32, 146, 147, 178, 183, 184.

⁴⁰ Observe also that Gautier calls *Spirite* a *nouvelle fantastique*.

⁴¹ *Une Passion dans le désert* and *la Grande Bretèche*.

⁴² Cf., for example, Flaubert's *Trois contes* (published in 1877). The

Ultimately there will present itself the interesting and elusive problem of the relation of French brief narrative to the French genius. In the case of the American type of story, Professor Alphonso Smith points out that "it has a brief intensity that harmonizes with the national temper. It moves . . . to its conclusion—it does its work—with an economy of details, with a definiteness of purpose, with an efficiency of means that find a quick response from the average American reader."⁴³ What of the French tales? Do they similarly correspond to the Gallic love of precision? The short-story, it has been observed,⁴⁴ often fulfills the requirements of the three unities of the French classical stage. Does that characteristic of the French national mind which has made it cherish the formality of the unities, and the symmetry of *la pièce bien faite*, mean that it feels a ready sympathy for brief narrative thus prescribed?⁴⁵ Answers to this and to a multitude of other questions must depend upon an exact and critical investigation of the whole subject.

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narrative methods in the first two, *un Cœur simple* and *Saint Julien l'Hospitalier*, are far from conventional, but, in the slight degree that ordinary terms apply, they are condensed *romans*. The third, *Hérodiade*, is precisely what Brunetière would call a *nouvelle*.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴ Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴⁵ The relation of brief narrative to the drama has been carefully developed, in the case of the *Novelle*, by Spielhagen (*Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans*, Leipzig, 1883). The principle, enunciated by Poe for the short-story, that a peculiar totality of effect results from a single, uninterrupted presentation of a piece of literature, is applied by Strindberg to the drama, as in *The Outlaw*, "a single well-built act . . . taking an hour for its performance" (Preface to *Miss Julia*, Plays, second series, tr. by Björkman, p. 107). Examination of the French field may reveal parallel resemblances. Cf., for example, the stories and the one-act plays of Villiers de l'Isle Adam.